

Receiver talks
re-opening of city
schools this fall

HOLYOKE – Dr. Alberto Vázquez Matos, the new receiver/superintendent of schools, issued a statement regarding the re-opening plan for Holyoke Schools:

I am honored and excited to be the Superintendent/Receiver of the Holyoke Public Schools. I want to thank Dr. Zrike, the School Committee, the HPS leadership team and staff members, and Commissioner Riley and

SCHOOLS, 11

Area towns and
cities supporting
Soldiers Home

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Soldiers' Home Coalition today noted the first action by town boards and municipal bodies in Massachusetts to pass a resolution that calls for much-needed staffing and capital improvements in support of Veterans who reside at the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke.

The Board of Selectmen in Ludlow and the Southwick Select Board, both in Hampden County, and the Granby Selectboard in Hampshire County, resolved to call on Governor Baker and the Legislature to take immediate action to increase funding to ensure sufficient staff, equipment and supplies to provide safe care at the Home.

SUPPORTING, 12

More funding
approved for
CT River projects

REGION – With \$1.5 million in funding for the Connecticut River Clean-up Committee, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is supporting critical work to eliminate combined sewer overflows.

Monies will be directed to several projects this year in Springfield, Chicopee and Holyoke to further reduce the amount of untreated sewage that annually spills into the Connecticut River during rainstorms.

PROJECTS, 12

Graduation still set for Roberts Field this Sunday



The Holyoke High School graduation is set to take place on Sunday, Aug. 2.

File photos

By Shelby Macri
smacri@gmail.com

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke High School's graduating class of 2020 has had a special and unprecedented year, with graduation ceremonies being re-planned and postponed. The school faculty is dedicated to keeping their students and staff safe during this time, as they are following health and safety guidelines for the ceremony.

Though the graduation ceremony had been planned and postponed, the staff has come to the final plan and is ready to proceed on Sunday, Aug. 2.

"We then adjusted to our final plan which is ultimately most important to the students, to celebrate together safely as a class." Judy Taylor, the Director of Communications at Holyoke Public Schools said. "Safety is our top priority, and although we are not able to have family members present, we believe this solution is the best balance of honoring community traditions and following the health



Due to the current pandemic conditions, there was some controversy over potential changes in plans, but the ceremony will still take place at Roberts Field.

guidelines that contribute to keeping our community; especially those who are most vulnerable, safe."

The graduation ceremony will be held at Holyoke High School's Robert Athletic Complex, and although the ceremony is on Sunday, Aug. 2, the school staff has partaken in alternative celebrations for

their seniors. These included delivering lawn signs to seniors houses, having car parades, and celebrating during the cap and gown distribution. The graduation ceremony will mainly consist of the graduating class as families and friends are unable to attend, this is to keep the total number of people to a minimum per the Board of

Health guidelines. "The health and safety restrictions on family attendance at the graduation ceremony is a deeply regrettable consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic," Taylor said.

The school will be holding alternatives for family members as the ceremony will be

See GRADUATION, page 12

Velis named to Holyoke Soldiers'
Home Oversight Committee

HOLYOKE – Senator John Velis, who represents Agawam in the State Senate, was appointed this week to a Special Joint Oversight Committee that is tasked with making recommendations for changes at the Holyoke Soldiers' Home.



Senator John Velis

The committee will be investigating the deadly outbreak of COVID-19 that took place at the facility, and will make recommendations on infrastructure and administrative changes. This work will involve looking at all aspects of the facility, from the actual building, to the organizational structure, to staffing levels and medical care, and will have a major impact on what the facility will look like for years to come.

When asked about his goals for the committee, Senator Velis emphasized how important it will be for the new Home to meet the

evolving needs of the growing veteran population in Massachusetts.

"We need to think about both the immediate and long-term needs of the facility. During this work, it is going to be absolutely critical that we take

into account the next generation of veterans that will be depending on the Home, of which the fastest growing group is women." Said Velis. "Veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars will rely on the Home for years to come, and it is imperative that their specific needs are addressed so that the Home can be sustainable."

The committee will not be the first time that Velis has advocated for increased support for the Soldiers' Home. In early July, Velis secured a \$250,000 earmark for the facility in the Senate's

See VELIS, page 12

Free COVID testing offered

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM – Gov. Charlie Baker announced Monday afternoon the Town of Agawam will have a site that will have free COVID-19 testing for anyone in need of a test.

Unlike some other sites, testing is completely free of charge and an individual does not need to be experiencing any type of symptoms or other problems. It could simply be for peace of mind or because you have been exposed to someone with the virus, or possibly been with a large crowd recently.

Health Director Kathleen Auer confirmed she was spending this week working with Tapestry Health, which will be administering the testing site in town.

Details emerged Tuesday for the Agawam testing site.

On Wednesday, Aug. 5, individuals can come to Agawam Junior High School, located at 1305 Springfield St. Testing will be held between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. While there are walk-ins allowed, making an appointment is pre-

ferred in order to control traffic coming through the site. To call Tapestry and arrange an appointment, the number is (413) 364-2149.

There will also be testing on Thursday, Aug. 6 from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m.

According to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts website, additional hours will be added, but they have not been announced as of press time.

The website states the free testing will be available through at least Aug. 14 with the possibility it will be extended.

The website said the testing "open to everyone." It will be provided free of charge, and an individual need not be showing any symptoms of coronavirus. The testing is also not restricted to residents of Agawam. Anyone is welcome to the site.

The test results will be provided to participants in confidence and participants are encouraged to share their results with their regular doctor.

See TESTING, page 11

\$8.7 million in federal funding given to HMC

HOLYOKE – Over the week-end, Congressman Richard E. Neal, Chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means joined President and CEO of Holyoke Medical Center Spiros Haritas for the announcement of \$8,700,000 in federal funding to the hospital.

“This money is a lifeline for providers who are caring for the COVID patients and others in the community who need quality health care, and Holyoke Medical Center is one of the

best,” said Congressman Neal. “The COVID-19 pandemic is first and foremost a health crisis. This funding will help support patients, providers, and frontline health workers. Holyoke also stepped up and took on patients from the Holyoke Soldiers Home when it was overwhelmed with COVID-related infections. Thanks to their help, many veterans received the care they needed during a troubling time.”

“Holyoke Medical Center, like other Massachusetts hospitals, has suffered

significant financial losses in the fight against the pandemic,” said Haritas. “For a small stand-alone community hospital, the impact of the additional costs and the loss of revenue can mean financial ruin. Chairman Neal has tirelessly advocated for all hospitals, and very specifically for the most vulnerable hospitals, like Holyoke Medical Center. We are extremely grateful for the advocacy and the financial relief we received. This funding directly helps our nurses, doctors and frontline staff because it secures

PPE, equipment and resources for the ongoing fight against the pandemic. We know that the Chairman will continue to keep a watchful eye on Massachusetts hospitals as this pandemic unfolds. We are confident he will do everything in his power to continue the much-needed support.”

This funding was made possible through the Department of Health and Human Services Provider Relief Fund’s second round of high impact COVID-19 area funding to hospitals.



Springfield Technical Community College was the latest school to delay the start of fall sports. Submitted photo

STCC delays start of soccer, basketball, wrestling seasons

SPRINGFIELD – Following an announcement from the NJCAA, Springfield Technical Community College will delay the start of the soccer, basketball and wrestling seasons until after Jan. 1.

The National Junior College Athletic Association, which governs community college athletics, announced the majority of competition will be moved to the spring semester. The NJCAA stated in a plan of action that close-contact sports should not be held in the fall to keep student-athletes and staff safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

STCC Athletic Director Jenkin Gould said he is happy with the NJCAA’s decision.

“While spring soccer is unusual so is our current situation,” Gould said. “This offers a better chance for our student-athletes to participate in a championship season, one that might have been greatly restricted by concerns surrounding COVID-19. This decision allows for the entire association to move forward as one and support all its student-athletes.”

STCC belongs to the National Collegiate Wrestling Association (NCWA), which as of July 23 had not made a final statement on the fall season. While STCC wrestling is not affiliated with the NJCAA, the college will follow its plan and delay competitive wrestling after Jan. 1.

STCC Vice President of Student Affairs Darcey Kemp said athletics at STCC build character and help instill values of discipline, sportsmanship and work ethic.

“We’re proud of our student-athletes and recognize the hard work and dedication of the staff who coach them,” Kemp said. “Safety is a top priority, and we applaud the NJCAA on their plan to delay the start times for close-contact sports during these challenging times.”

According to a statement from the NJCAA, all winter sports competition will begin in January with a majority of championship seasons moved from March to April. Close contact fall sports will be held in the spring. STCC’s men’s and women’s soccer teams will kick off their seasons in March.

Virtual walk to help NAMI

AGAWAM – The National Alliance on Mental Illness of Western Massachusetts will be holding its 20th Annual Walkathon Virtual Celebration, ‘A Journey of Hope and Recovery’ on Aug. 23, starting at 11 a.m.

The event is suitable for all ages and abilities and will directly benefit NAMI Western Massachusetts continuing efforts to help improve the lives of those individuals living with mental health conditions and their families.

NAMI is the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the nation’s largest grassroots mental health organization. NAMI provides advocacy, education, support and public awareness so that all indi-

viduals and families affected by mental illness can Build Better Lives.

Folks may help NAMI-WM’s mission by participating in this Virtual Walk or by sponsoring the event. Anyone who would like to submit a brief video saying how NAMI-WM has helped them or a loved one or how they maintain good mental health during these difficult times, these would be most appreciated. Videos should be two minutes or less, and the deadline is Aug.7. All entries should be emailed to information@namiwm.org.

For further information, contact NAMI’s office at 413-786-9139 or visit www.namiwm.org/events for entry and sponsorship forms.

Virtual run steps off in support of children on Saturday, Aug. 1

SPRINGFIELD – At a time when many people are seeking fun, new ways to stay in touch with friends and family and stay active, the Dunkin’ Joy in Childhood Foundation announced its first ever Dunkin’ JOY Run.

The virtual program steps off Saturday, Aug. 1 and invites Dunkin’ fans across Western Massachusetts to run or walk throughout the month of August. All funds raised for the Dunkin’ Joy in Childhood Foundation through the Dunkin’ JOY Run will be directed to health and hunger organizations supporting children in underserved communities.

Runners and walkers can register to participate in the Dunkin’ JOY Run at www.bringjoy.org. Participants who register at the Dunkin’ Runner level will receive a Dunkin’ JOY Run T-shirt, as well as the opportunity to see their picture displayed on one of Dunkin’s hometown billboards in Boston this year. All registrants will receive digital photo filters and gifs so they can share their progress on social media during the month.

Dunkin’ JOY Run participants can

fundraise to support the Foundation and receive incentives for their fundraising achievements, with no minimum fundraising requirement to participate. Participants can create a personal fundraising page and fundraise as individuals, join a team, or start a team. As they hit fundraising levels, participants will become eligible to receive Dunkin’ shoelaces, hats, coffee mugs and sweat-shirts – with the top fundraising individual receiving free coffee for a year donated by Dunkin’.

“While Western Mass. runs on Dunkin’, this virtual race is a fun way to keep our community runnin’ for a good cause,” said Dunkin’ franchise owner Peter Martins. “This year has been unlike any other and has only strengthened our commitment to the communities and families we serve. We’re looking forward to getting out there and running to raise funds for health and hunger relief for children in underserved communities.”

To learn more about the Dunkin’ Joy in Childhood Foundation, and find additional details about the Dunkin’ JOY Run, visit www.bringjoy.org.

UMass Amherst will make standardized tests optional for the next three years

AMHERST – Beginning with the spring 2021 term, and continuing for each spring and fall term through spring 2023, the University of Massachusetts Amherst will make standardized tests optional for its first-year entering applicants.

For the past several months, the university has monitored how possible, safe and secure it will be for students to take the SAT or ACT. James Roche, vice provost for enrollment management, said that in recent weeks it has become obvious that the challenges to testing presented by the coronavirus pandemic will persist in the months ahead. “UMass Amherst draws applications from throughout the world and few, if any, states and countries currently offer testing sites that provide the access

and safety that students, families, and schools have come to expect,” he said. “This is especially true for students who already encounter barriers in pursuit of a college education, including under-represented minority, first-generation, and low-income students. Given all these considerations, going test optional is clearly the right choice.”

Historically, UMass Amherst has used a holistic review to evaluate applicants. The quantitative assessment component of that review was done using a formula that combined the applicant’s high school GPA and the best combination of test scores. Roche said the university’s research shows that of the separate components, the high school GPA is a stronger predictor of student performance, persistence and success; howev-

er, it is also known that the combination of the two components provides an even stronger predictor than either the GPA or test score alone.

The university has analyzed three years of data and more than 100,000 applicant records to develop a formula for its test-optional assessment that uses the high school GPA as the base. For applicants who either have or will submit test scores, UMass Amherst will compare the result of the formula with and without the test score included and give the applicant the highest value of the two. This test-optional approach applies to all majors. As it always has, UMass Amherst will continue to consider the rigor of students’ high school coursework in its assessment, especially for courses that apply most directly to

the applicant’s intended major.

Roche said, “UMass Amherst has committed to being test-optional for the next three years. As one of the country’s top-25 public research universities, we look forward to using the test-optional approach during this period to learn more about the relationship between high school grades and standardized test scores, and to develop even better models for predicting student success in college. Our mission is to identify and recruit students who can grow and thrive at UMass Amherst, progressing to earn their degree as effectively and efficiently as possible.”

Additional information about UMass Amherst’s test-optional approach can be found at <https://www.umass.edu/admissions/test-optional-policy>.

Women’s group appoints new leadership

REGION – The Hampden County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls has elected new leadership, Gabrielle Jackson, a Springfield resident and Educator, has been elected as HCCSWG Chair. Jackson was first appointed to the Commission in January of 2020 and serves alongside nine fellow Commissioners. Jackson is excited to serve and continue to support, collaborate and advocate on behalf of women and girls across Hampden County. In addition to being an Educator, Jackson is a dedicated mentor to youth in the community. As an Educator and School Administrator, she encourages students to aspire to great things such as public service in their community and to support their community with energy, enthusiasm and special gifts. Most of her stu-

dents are at-risk, and encouraging them to reach their dreams, instilling confidence in themselves and their ability to make “good trouble” and achieve great things. She believes in our students, encouraging them to think beyond themselves; to see themselves as valued contributors to their academic and personal goals. Jackson is preceded by Commissioner Dawn DiStefano, who served as Chair for 2 years. HCCSWG also elected Tara Marshall, a Feeding Hills resident and certified debt management professional, as Secretary. Marshall was also appointed in January, alongside Jackson and fellow Commissioner, Lizzy Ortiz of Springfield. Marshall has been working in the non-profit credit counseling industry for over twenty-one years. As

one of the Customer Care managers at a non-profit credit counseling agency located in Agawam, she leads a dedicated team of representatives in a customer service call center that provides quality service to a nationwide client base of over 12,000 consumers. Marshall is preceded by Michelle Gonçalves. They serve alongside Vice Chair Patricia Hallberg of Wilbraham. Patricia is also the Chief Executive Officer of the Girl Scouts of Central and Western Massachusetts. Fellow Commissioners include Jennifer Metsch of Longmeadow and Shanique Spalding of Springfield. The Commission plans to continue to work on advoca-



Gabrielle Jackson

cy that amplifies and provides support of the needs of women and girls during and after the pandemic, through a series of virtual events and in partnership with local organizations. The Hampden County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls is a regional arm of the statewide Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women. The Commission is an independent state agency that was legislatively created in 1998 to advance the women of the Commonwealth to full equality in all areas of life and to promote their rights and opportunities. HCCSWG serves as a permanent, effective voice for the women and girls of Massachusetts.

Fire Marshal urges safe pool chemical handling

Summer is here and with residents spending more time than normal at home this year, State Fire Marshal Peter J. Ostroskey is reminding pool owners to make sure their chemicals are handled and stored properly. “Pool chemicals can be dangerous when they become wet or are mixed with other chemicals,” said Ostroskey. “Make sure all chemicals are stored in a secure and dry area, and carefully follow all manufacturer’s instructions when using them.” Ostroskey said local fire departments have responded to several emergencies involving pool chemicals and several individuals have required trips to the hospital as a result. He said simple precautions can prevent an enjoyable afternoon from becoming a stressful visit to the emergency room. “Call 9-1-1 when you first suspect something is not right and get everyone outside into fresh air,” he said. According to the Division of Fire Services, in June of this year a state hazardous materials team responded to a home in Whitman, where a resident had caused several minor explosions by mixing two pool chemicals together. The resident sustained minor hearing damage because of the explosions. Earlier this month, a state haz-

ardous materials team responded to a home in Agawam, where pool chemicals that were being mixed inside the home caused two people to go to the hospital. A similar incident a few days later in West Bridgewater resulted in another person being transported to the hospital. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, more than 4,000 people nationwide visit the hospital with pool chemical related injuries each year. To prevent a dangerous incident at home, pool owners are encouraged to read and follow the manufacturer’s instructions carefully. Use gloves, eye protection and masks as indicated on the packaging. Children should never handle pool chemicals, and even teenagers should not do so without constant adult supervision. Folks are advised to put lids on chemical containers whenever they are done with them. When containers are left open, water can get in and react with the chemicals. When using powder-based chemicals, folks should remember: powder in the water, not water in the powder. Thoroughly clean tools and equipment that were used to handle one chemical before using them with a different chemical to avoid dangerous reactions.

Spilled substances (from damaged containers or accidents) must be cleaned up and disposed of properly to avoid creating an inadvertent chemical reaction. Mixing chemicals can lead to a chemical reaction that may generate temperatures high enough to ignite nearby combustible materials. Mixing can also lead to the release of highly toxic and dangerous chlorine gas. Mixing should always be done outdoors in well-ventilated areas. DFS notes proper pool chemical storage is important. Pool owners should review how they store their pool chemicals to identify and correct situations where chemicals could be intentionally or accidentally mixed. Pool owners should separate incompatible substances, as the most common pool chemicals are inherently incompatible with each other, so be sure to keep them apart. They should also avoid storing containers of liquids above containers of powders or other incompatible substances to prevent accidental mixing caused by leaking containers. Avoid mixing old chemicals with fresh chemicals, even if they are the same type. Use separate, designated scoops for each chemical. Handle only one chemical at a time and make sure that tools

used with one substance are not used with another unless all residues are removed. Folks should also use separate, designated containers for cleanup of spilled materials to avoid inadvertent mixing of spilled substances. Consult a local hazardous waste disposal facility for more detailed information on proper waste disposal. Store pool chemicals outside the home or attached garage. A locked stand-alone shed is recommended. Locked storage areas can keep children, pets and unauthorized users out. When disposing of chemicals, DFS cautions never to dispose of chemicals down the drain. Take old chemicals to a household hazardous waste collection day, when available, or to a commercial hazardous waste facility. Since sodium hypochlorite (bleach) is the same chemical used in most water treatment facilities, check to see if your local plant will accept the chemical. For more information about how to store and use pool chemicals safely, visit www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/aquatics-professionals/pool-chemical-safety.html; www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/hazardous/hhwhome.htm; or www.epa.gov/rmp/chemical-safety-alert-safe-storage-and-handling-swimming-pool-chemicals.

Senate passes bill to invest \$17 billion in Mass. transportation

Bill includes authorization for East-West Rail project

BOSTON – State Sen. Eric Lesser (D-Logmeadow), vice chair of the Joint Committee on Transportation recently joined colleagues in the Senate in passing legislation to jumpstart investment in transportation infrastructure and make the commonwealth’s transportation system more reliable and accessible to residents. The legislation includes provisions authored by Lesser on Regional Ballot Initiatives to give communities the option to invest and vote on local projects. The bill also includes a \$50,000 authorization for East-West Rail as a down payment on preparatory work as the MassDOT study nears completion and momentum builds on a federal level. “Communities have been hit hard by the pandemic and job losses are at all-time highs. There has never been a more urgent need to invest in our infrastructure and create jobs in every corner of our state,” said Lesser. “The investments called for in this legislation will put thousands of people to work and will help restore our economy in every region of our commonwealth.”

The bill, “An Act Authorizing and Accelerating Transportation Investment,” authorizes roughly \$17 billion in bonds for a variety of infrastructure projects, including both upkeep and maintenance, as well as modernization. In addition to addressing issues such as construction, regional initiatives, traffic congestion and transportation network company data sharing, the legislation addresses equity in the transportation system by requiring a low-income fare program, which will provide discounted transit fares to qualifying riders on MBTA transportation and commuter rail, starting on Jan. 1, 2022. To further aid the Department in reducing congestion, the bill establishes a special commission on roadway and congestion pricing, which would also investigate and recommend options for regionally equitable roadway pricing mechanisms. Additionally, the bill allows public authorities to more clearly include time as a factor in evaluating private bids for construction projects. The Department is required to conduct a study examining the potential of mileage-based revenue-collection as an alternative to the current system of toll roads. In a move that will give regions better control over their transportation

infrastructure, the bill allows cities and towns, upon local acceptance by local government and local voters at the ballot, to utilize certain revenue sources for transportation-related projects within the municipality or region. These regional ballot initiatives are utilized across the county to allow cities and towns to raise money locally to invest in local transportation projects. At the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, two new offices are created by the bill: An Office of Bus Transformation and an Office of Rail Enhancement. Each office would be dedicated to improving the productivity, equity and environmental sustainability of its respective system. The Department is given new authorities in establishing speed limits in construction zones and in using blue lights to mark construction activities, where permitted by the Registrar of Motor Vehicles. Furthermore, the Department would be authorized to enter fixed-price job order contracts with a contractor for the contractor’s performance of a specific construction project. The bill also addresses the growth of transportation network companies and the public’s need to be informed. It requires

that such companies submit monthly reports to the Transportation Network Companies Division of the Department of Public Utilities. That division is then required to make an annual report, publicly available on its website, posting the total number of rides provided by all transportation network companies, as well as the cities and towns in which those rides originated and terminated, and average miles and minutes of rides which terminated in a different town than they originated. The bill would also establish regulations for scooters and e-bikes. The bill also defines and regulates the amounts of fines for several transportation-related activities. Penalties are defined for improper use of a designated bus lane, for railroads who fail to provide timely and sufficient flaggers, speeding in an active construction zone, nonpayment of citations, and failure to move a vehicle involved in a crash from a travel lane on a public way. Passengers who fail to pay or prepay fares would be subject to less punitive punishment and arrest for fare evasion on the MBTA transit system would be prohibited. The bill must now be reconciled with legislation previously passed by the state’s House of Representatives.

Guest Column

Questions about working while collecting benefits

By Russell Gloor

SOCIAL SECURITY MATTERS

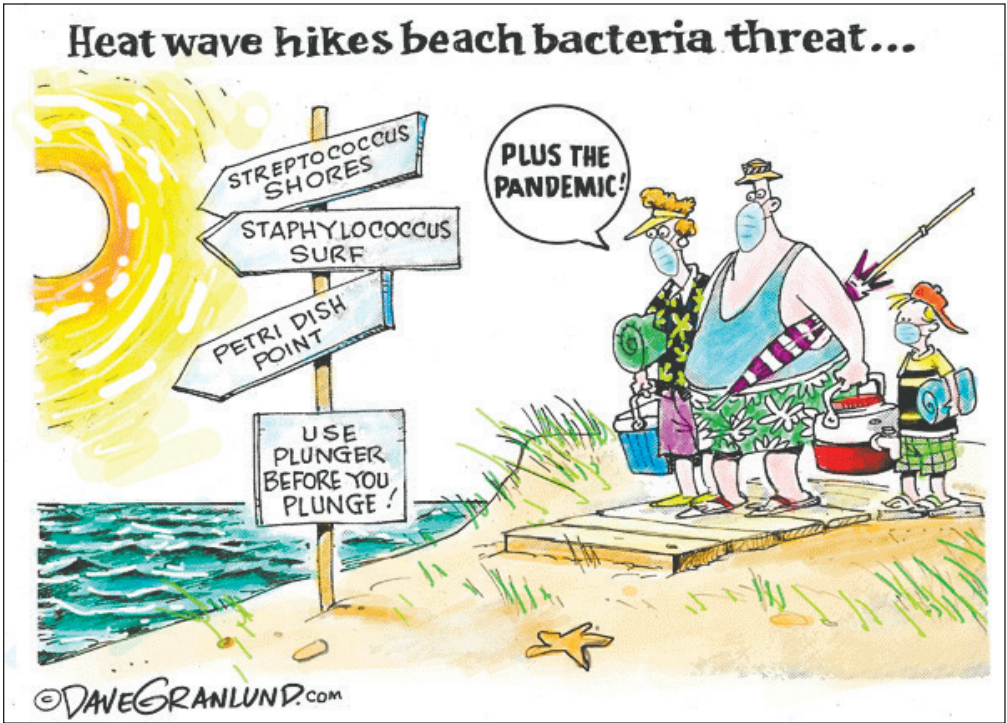
Dear Rusty: In 2019 I was out of work for an extended period. I was eligible to begin receiving retirement benefits (at age 63) and started to do so in August. My part-time job was limited so it did not conflict with my Social Security amount, but in October through the end of 2019 I went back to my old industry at four times the pay rate. My understanding is that I will need to pay Social Security back about \$1.40 for every benefit dollar they have paid me while I worked at the higher wage. When and how is that paid? Signed: Part Time Again

Dear Part Time Again: If you started your Social Security benefits in August of last year at age 63, for the remainder of 2019 you were subject to the “first year rule” which means you had a monthly earnings limit of \$1,470 after your benefit started. If you exceeded that monthly limit starting in October of 2019 and for the rest of the year, you won’t be entitled to benefits for the months of October, November and December. Social Security will consider that an overpayment, and they will want you to repay all those benefits to them. However, if it would be to your advantage to do so, you can request that Social Security use the annual earnings limit for 2019, instead of the monthly limit. For example, if using the 2019 annual earnings limit (\$17,640) would result in a smaller impact to your benefits, Social Security may accommodate your request to use the annual limit. Depending upon your total earnings in 2019, you may want to consider asking that the annual earnings limit be used, instead of the monthly limit, when determining your 2019 impact for exceeding the earnings limit.

Starting in 2020 you’ll be subject to an annual limit of \$18,240 (limit changes yearly). If you exceed the annual limit, SS will take back benefits equal to \$1 for every \$2 you are over the limit. If you’ve again stopped working at the higher amount, and now only working part-time and won’t earn more than \$18,240 for this year, you’ll not be subject to the annual limit. But exceeding the 2019 monthly limit last year will still affect you.

You will receive a form from Social Security asking you to specify your 2019 income month by month for the months you were receiving benefits. Since you exceeded the monthly limit from October through December, they’ll be asking you to repay all of the benefits you received for those months.

See *BENEFITS* page ??



Guest Column

Cleome, a welcome garden volunteer

Recently, I was weeding an area of my yard that had been a fern garden. I never had such a distaste for ferns until I tried to eradicate them, mat-like roots and all. I vowed henceforth that every new sprout would be removed immediately and within a month of my initial labor, I found myself back in the same garden, yanking up all the baby ferns, crabgrass, purslane and the like. To my surprise, however, there was a friend among the foes! A cleome, sometimes known as spider flower, had seeded itself. Had the seed lay dormant for years only to be exposed to the light now that the ferns were gone? One is never certain how volunteers make their way to the landscape.

Cleome was one of the flowers that my mother and I planted in the annual border along the foundation of our house; for that reason it holds a special place in my

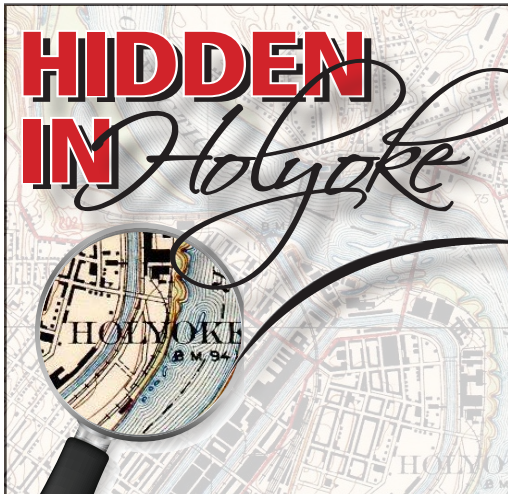


heart. As a child, I was drawn to the seed pods of this peculiar plant; if you waited until they were “just right” and gave them a squeeze, the seeds would fly everywhere. What fun! This attribute gives the plant tremendous “staying power” in the garden. In other words, it pops up everywhere the following season (and maybe seasons later?). This can be a very good thing if you enjoy having the cleome around as much as I do.

Spider flower goes by the scientific name *Cleome hasslerana*. Older cultivars such as ‘Helen Campbell’ and the ‘Queen’ series top off at an airy four or five feet tall, while the newer ‘Sparkler’ hybrids are a bit shorter and bushier. Besides white, spider flower comes in pink, cherry and lavender. It was given such a unique name because of the flower’s long, slender stamens that remind one of spider legs protruding from the plant. The stamens hold the eventual seed pods a distance away giving them even more “popping power.”

Because cleomes are flower producing power-houses, they sometimes become exhausted by midsummer; their lower leaves yellow and flowers start to fade. I always thought that if they were dead-headed like other, more common annuals were, maybe they would last longer into the season. So, as an experiment I clipped the seed-pods close to the plant as soon as they began to form. Unfortunately the overall form of the plant was altered, not for the better, and with little reward for my work. Then I began to

See *GARDEN*, page ??



Each week, *The Holyoke Sun* will feature a photo of a distinctive place, landmark, sculpture, sign or other recognizable object located somewhere in the city.

Think you know what or where it is? Readers are encouraged to submit their guesses to “Hidden in Holyoke” via email to TheSun@Turley.com. In order to qualify for the weekly contest, entries must be received by Wednesday at noon for inclusion into Friday’s edition. Please include your full name with your guess in an email to TheSun@turley.com. If more than one correct answer is received, the names of all those who submitted guesses will be listed. For more information, contact *The Holyoke Sun* at 413-283-8398.



Last week’s “Hidden in Holyoke” was the flyover highway at Dean Technical High School.



the Sun

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PATRICK H. TURLEY
CEO

KEITH TURLEY
President

INTERIM EDITOR
Greg Scibelli
thesun@turley.com

STAFF WRITER
Peter Spotts
pspotts@turley.com

ADVERTISING SALES
Wendy Delcamp
wdelcamp@turley.com

SPORTS EDITOR
Greg Scibelli
sports@turley.com

SOCIAL MEDIA



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www.sun.turley.com

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A Quote

OF NOTE

“Accept responsibility for your life. Know that it is you who will get you where you want to go, no one else.”

Les Brown

Letters to the Editor Policy

Letters to the Editor have a maximum of 350 words. We require writers to include their name, address and phone number in order for our office to authenticate authorship prior to publication. Addresses and phone numbers are not published.

Unsigned or anonymous letters will NOT be published.

We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions. Libelous, unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks or defamation of character are not allowed.

Deadline for submissions is Wednesday at noon.

Please email (preferred) letters to thesun@turley.com. Mailed letters can be sent to *The Sun*, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069.

WNEU to offer Master of Science in Construction Management

SPRINGFIELD – Western New England University has announced the addition of a new Master of Science in Construction Management program to the list of graduate degree offerings.

“Construction Management is defined as a professional service that uses specialized, project management techniques to oversee the planning, design, and construction of a project, from its beginning to its end,” says Kenneth Lee, founding Chair for the Construction Management Department as well as Professor and Chair of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Western New England University (WNE).

U.S. News and World Report ranks a Construction Manager as #1 in Best Construction Jobs and #43 in 100 Best

Jobs with a low unemployment rate of 2.3%. The Bureau of Labor Statistics website shows that the job outlook growth (2016-2026) for Construction Managers is at 11% (faster than average), with a median salary of \$93,370 per year.

“Construction projects can range from improving intersection traffic flows, to massive multi-billion dollar infrastructure projects with a decade long development environment, each which needs specialized people with specialized skill sets to manage” adds Christian Salmon, WNE Assistant Professor of Industrial Engineering and Engineering Management.

With courses rooted in civil engineering, industrial engineering, and engineering management the program strives to

provide a well-rounded knowledge base in engineering as it pertains to construction management. Elective opportunities in business and management will give students a perspective into the business world that will prepare them for management and leadership roles.

“The MS in Construction Management is a great fit with our existing undergraduate and graduate programs offered by our College of Engineering,” said Executive Director of Graduate Admissions, Matthew Fox. “We continue to accept applications for new graduate candidates, and those starting the construction management program this fall will be able to earn their master’s in as few as 18 months studying part-time or in one year studying full-time.”

The program is tailored for students to choose from three options to complete the degree. The All-Course option allows students to complete the 10 graduate courses that include open electives choosing from courses in Civil, Electrical, and Mechanical Engineering as well as Engineering Management or Business. Through the Project or Thesis options students will work with a faculty advisor to take a deeper dive in a topic of interest, culminating in a final report and presentation.

Applications are now being accepted for the MS in Construction Management program. Classes begin September 28, 2020. To learn more, contact the Office of Graduate Studies at 413-782-1517 or email study@wne.edu.

Baker announces \$20M to support vital social services, small businesses

BOSTON – The Baker-Polito Administration recently announced \$19.6 million for municipalities to address emergency needs in light of the coronavirus pandemic. This funding will support 181 communities in their work to provide vital services to low-income residents and small businesses affected by the recent outbreak.

Local governments and regional consortiums will fund social services, including homelessness prevention, food pantries and assistance, and job training for in-demand health care workers and technicians. Many communities will also make grants available for local small businesses with five or less employees. A total of 36 lead awardees will organize within their respective municipality or

region to deliver services.

The Department of Housing and Community Development made the \$19.6 million award through the federally funded Community Development Block Grant program. Congress allocated new emergency funding for the program through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act – the CARES Act – to address substantial needs in low and moderate-income communities affected by the pandemic. DHCD has received \$46 million in special CDBG funds so far and is distributing funding across municipalities and stakeholders to meet increased needs, with a focus on helping households maintain housing stability.

In June, the Baker-Polito Administration announced a \$20 mil-

lion Emergency Rental and Mortgage Assistance program, which is also funded in part through this federal allocation. This new fund will help more low-income households who have lost employment or income due to the pandemic maintain stable housing, and builds on DHCD’s existing homelessness prevention program, RAFT. In March, Governor Baker announced a \$5 million infusion for the fund to address increased need.

DHCD has received more than \$160 million in federal funding through the CARES Act, including more than \$20 million that has been distributed to Community Action Agencies for anti-poverty work, and is preparing to allocate additional funding for shelter

providers. DHCD continues to be in close contact with the stakeholder network, and is working with CHAPA and Mass Housing Partnership to track local emergency rental assistance programs and other resources available to those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This month, the Baker-Polito Administration unveiled a COVID-19 economic recovery package to respond to challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. The \$275 million package, designed to promote equity across the commonwealth, includes \$85 million for housing efforts, including investments in neighborhood stabilization and sustainable, climate resilient affordable housing, as well as \$50 million in targeted relief for small and minority-owned businesses.

GARDEN, from page 1

search out what exactly cleomes need in order to thrive with the idea if perhaps I met those requirements I’d have better luck.

I had always known that cleomes prefer full sun and well-drained soil. What I didn’t know was that they also like fertile soil and space away from one another. In other words, three per 18” container will not work and regular doses of liquid feed are a must.

In the north, the cleome’s habit of self-sowing doesn’t become annoying, but in warmer areas it can become weedy. Clipping the seed-pods as mentioned above would “nip this problem in

the bud.” Seedlings that develop from volunteers will likely be a blend color-wise of the plants you grew last year because they are cross-pollinated by insects. Only time will tell what color my cleome flower will be. I can’t wait to see it and have it drop all of its wonderful seeds just in time for next year’s garden.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 28 years, she has held the position of staff horticulturalist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to ekennedy@turley.com with “Gardening Question” in the subject line.

BENEFITS, from page 1

They will give you the option of either repaying them in full in a lump sum, or they will recover what you owe by withholding your monthly benefits until the overpayment is satisfied. That will mean you’ll go some months without benefits, the number of months dependent upon your monthly benefit amount and how much you owe them. Remember, you have the option to request the annual limit if it will benefit you.

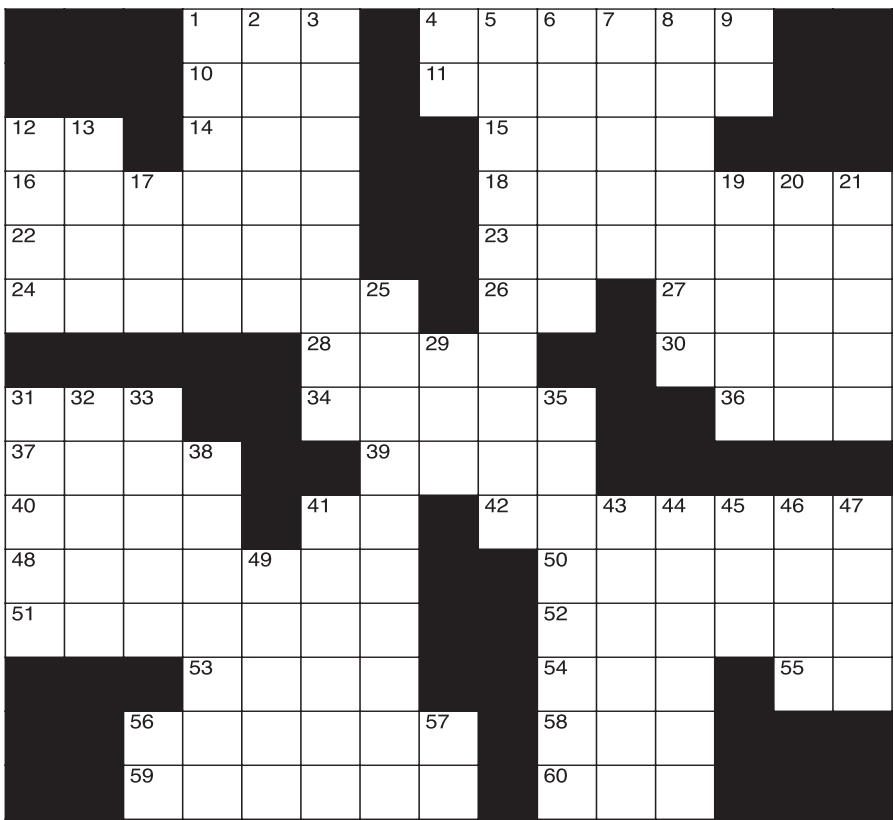
Though you’ll lose benefits for some number of months now, when you reach your full retirement age (66 years and 4 months) they will automatically give you time credit for the number of months they withheld benefits and move your SS claim date forward. That will increase your monthly benefit amount slightly, and you’ll get that slightly higher benefit for the rest of your life.

One final point: In the year you

reach your full retirement age the annual earnings limit will go up by about 2.5 times and the penalty for exceeding it will be less (\$1 for every \$3 over the limit). And when you reach your full retirement age the earnings limit goes away entirely.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation’s staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.

Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor.



CLUES ACROSS
1. Central processing unit
4. Military action
10. How electricity gets to train carriages (abbr.)
11. Unsafe
12. Of (French)
14. Autonomic nervous system
15. Type of bean
16. Accuse formally of a crime
18. Promote
22. Type of lava
23. Meat from a deer
24. Herbaceous plants
26. Potato state
27. Helsinki neighborhood
28. Sports officials
30. Shout wildly

31. Reptile genus
34. Frocks
36. Born of
37. N. Scandinavian indigenous people
39. Poultry cage
40. Aquatic insect genus
41. Of I
42. Ad __: tirelessly repetitive
48. Item
50. Produce
51. Seedless raisin
52. Bond in a third party's control
53. Legendary character __ Finn
54. Space station
55. Note at the end of a letter
56. In a way, contradicted

58. Midway between northeast and east
59. Bears important traffic
60. Brooklyn hoopster

CLUES DOWN
1. Presides
2. Artist's tool
3. On a higher floor
4. Commercial
5. Something to watch
6. Chased
7. Commercial producers
8. Keyboard instrument
9. Blue grass state
12. Phonograph recording
13. Unusual
17. Popular average
19. A native or inhabitant of Asia
20. N. Sweden river
21. Related on the mother's side
25. Mediator
29. Partner of to
31. Arm bones
32. Korean seafood dish
33. Tap of the foot
35. Astronauts
38. Carolina footballer
41. Indiana city
43. Of or relating to bears
44. Not widely known
45. Body part
46. At the peak
47. High-pitched cries of a cat
49. A way to intimidate
56. Prosecutor
57. Atomic #66

CROSSWORD ANSWER on page 9

Community Newspaper

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Lesser files bill to review state’s COVID-19 response

BOSTON – State Sen. Eric Lesser (D-Longmeadow) and Rep. Jon Santiago (D-Boston) recently filed “An Act establishing the Commission of Inquiry on the Commonwealth of Massachusetts’ Response to and Recovery from the COVID-19 Crisis.” The legislation would task a commission with reviewing the state’s response to the novel coronavirus outbreak and make recommendations on how Massachusetts can better prepare in the future.

Lesser serves as Senate chair of the Joint Committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies as well as a member of the Senate’s COVID-19 task force. Santiago is a member of the Joint Committee on Public Health as well as an emergency room physician at Boston Medical Center.

“As we gain more insight into the spread of the Coronavirus outbreak and its impacts on Massachusetts, it is vital that we establish a dedicated nonpartisan commission to evaluate the response to the crisis and ensure future preparedness,” Lesser said. “The unprecedented nature of COVID-19 has upended our way of life and has revealed pre-existing inequities in our system that needs to be evaluated and improved upon, especially as the threat of resurgence lingers.”

The seven-member Commission must have expertise in professions such as economics; labor and workforce development; business and finance; public health; medicine, including epidemiology; health care; civil rights; law and governmental service; and

emergency preparedness. The Commission must be nonpartisan and cannot include a current elected official, an employee of state or local government, a registered lobbyist, or an employee of a trade association or special interest group. The chair of the Commission will be appointed by a majority vote of the members. The Commission will be required to hold public hearings and be given subpoena power to compel witnesses and produce documents during their investigation.

The legislation requires the Commission to file a report of its findings, analysis and recommendations six months after enactment and requires the Commission to convene its first meeting no more than 45 days following the enactment of the legislation.

Career coach talks transitioning in uncertainty

WILBRAHAM – Those considering a change in career are invited to participate in a remote workshop with a certified career coach through the Wilbraham Public Library next month.

Led by Anne Crawford, the workshop will take place Wednesday, Aug. 5 at 6 p.m. Crawford will help engage participants to talk about their career objec-

tives, set goals and how to foster a sense of control while looking for a new job. She will discuss how to understand and manage stress as well as how to open doors to other options, moving the employment process forward.

Registration is required and may be completed online at wilbrahamlibrary.org or by calling 596-6141.

Be aware of COVID-19 relief funding scam

LUDLOW – Last week, the Ludlow Police Department received information concerning a “COVID-19 Benefits Relief Plan” mailer that has been sent to many town residents. This mailer contained a return address that listed the return address to the “Administrative Office of Ludlow.”

The Town of Ludlow and the Ludlow Police Department want to advise all town residents that this mail solicitation is not in any way representative of any town offices. We believe that these solicitations are for unsecured personal loans under the guise of COVID-19 municipal funding. This premise is not true.

We would like to remind all residents to be cognizant of scams and fraud during these trying times. Always remember to verify sources through legitimate independent third-party sites like the Better Business Bureau’s, the Massachusetts Attorney General’s Office, or Municipal Offices.

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BEEF..... **\$6⁹⁹** **PORK.....** **\$4⁹⁹**

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Fall high school sports delayed through September

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

REGION – In what is a very ominous sign for the future of high school sports in the 2020-2021 school year, the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association has postponed the beginning of fall sports to the middle of September.

Last Tuesday, a virtual meeting of the MIAA Board of Directors took place, with a unanimous vote in favor of moving the state date of fall sports to Sept. 14. This means actual contests may not be played until the end of September. This could result in almost only a half season of action in fall sports, and some sports could still be cancelled altogether.

The state and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is planning to issue additional guidance in the coming month which could change how the MIAA approaches fall sports.

Currently, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is in Phase 3 of its re-opening plan, but Phase 3 is to remain stalled until either an impactful treatment or a vaccine for COVID-19 is developed and available for the public at large, allowing life to seemingly return to normal.

In Phase 3, Gov. Charlie

Baker and his administration have labeled soccer, football, and basketball as sports that are “high-risk” and involve too much close contact. Effectively, while practices can occur, all contests of those three sports are banned currently. The guidance specifically bans the sports at the recreational and “amateur” level, but does not specifically ban them at the high school level.

Part of the rationale in delaying the start of fall sports is for the DESE to wrap its head around the actual opening of school, and to determine whether or not learning will take place online, in-school, or hybrid of the two. Once that is determined, the MIAA will have to figure out how athletic practices and contests will work in a situation like that, including determining eligibility for students “attending school” and dealing with transportation.

The MIAA has a COVID-19 Task Force that is working with the state government and collecting guidance and information regularly. It was the task force that made the Sept. 14 recommendation to the MIAA BOD.

The season was originally supposed to start on Aug. 21.

Other concepts that have

See DELAYED, page 8

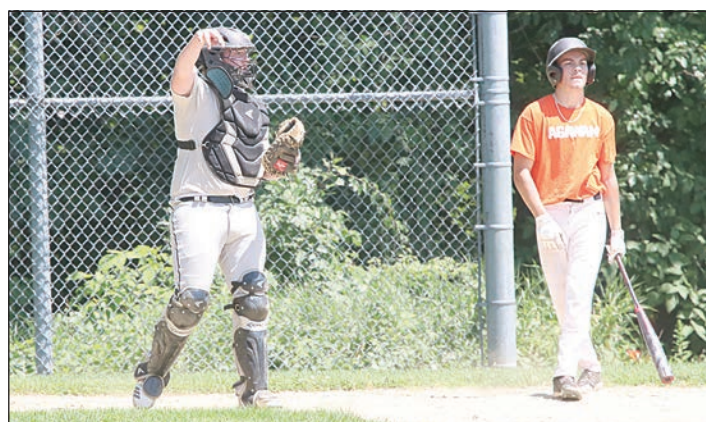
HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL ACTION CONTINUES



Baseball was played in Monson, Greenfield, and other locations on a bright afternoon.



An Agawam player makes a backhand play at shortstop.



Baseball has continued this summer as high-school-age players have formed their own junior and senior “Legion teams.”



Umpires continue to work from behind the mound calling balls and strikes.



A Monson-Palmer player makes a throw back to the infield.



Baseball action will continue through August in the high school league.
Photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

Aaron Fellows picks up another win at Monadnock Speedway

WINCHESTER, N.H. – Modified ace Ben Byrne earned his second victory lap of the summer Saturday, July 25, topping the 40-lap main event on the high banks of Monadnock

Speedway.

Aaron Fellows stayed undefeated this season, winning a thriller in the Late Model Sportsmen, while the Curtis twins, Chase and Jaret, finished

one-two in the Street Stocks to increase their standings atop the points parade.

Gordon Farnum topped the Mini Stocks for the third time this summer, and Pure

Stock kingpin Chris Davis put a string of recent misfortunes behind him, romping to victory Friday. Short track legend Randy Cabral won the 30-lap NEMA Midget feature, with

Avery Stohr victorious in the NEMA Lites.

Defending Sportsman Modified champion Todd Patnode and Keith Carzello led the 18-car NHSTRA field to the green, with Patnode – fresh off nightmare outings in each of the previous two weeks – set on reversing his fortunes.

To that end, the Swanzy hot shoe set a torrid pace for the first 13 go-rounds. Brian Chapin took the lead on lap 14 and, the next time around, Patnode pitted under green, moving Byrne up to second, with points leader and previous week’s winner Brian Robie in close tow.

Byrne was relentless over the next 18 circuits, finally taking the lead from the top lane on lap 32, with Chapin then



Ben Byrne was a winner again in the sportsman modified race.



Aaron Fellows was a winner in the late-model sportsman race.

Submitted photos

See SPEEDWAY, page 8

Matt Hirschman takes win at Star Speedway

EPPING, N.H. — Matt Hirschman wasn’t about to be denied. The Pennsylvania native, who is no stranger to Victory Lane on the Tri Track Open Modified Series circuit, returned to glory on Saturday night at Star Speedway in the ninth annual SBM race.

But the ride to victory wasn’t one that came without difficulty, especially at the end. Hirschman dominated the beginning, taking the lead on lap 25 and leading through lap 83, before a controlled caution slowed the race. While some elected to stay out, Hirschman worked to pit road for a fresh Hoosier tire, the charge started back to the front from ninth position. He would eventually pass Matt Swanson for the top spot on a restart at lap 112 and never look back.

It was the fifth win in the prestigious event for Hirschman, who is one of just two drivers to compete in all previous SBM races. The race was 121 laps, in honor of track owner and operator Bobby Webber’s son Tim Webber, who turned 21-years-old the week of the race.

The purse for the event was over \$40,000, a figure that didn’t change post-COVID pandemic. Due to COVID-

19, and guidance from the state of New Hampshire, Star Speedway ran at 50% capacity for the event in the grandstands, and sold out. Tri Track and Star officials made sure that all social distancing and safe health practices were in place.

“I’ve always enjoyed coming here, winning the first time I have ever came here, and having all of this success I’ve had in this SBM race after that,” Hirschman said. “Going back to the original races, it was, and has been, a big deal for us.”

Swanson, who started 27th after earning a provisional into the race, played a different strategy than Hirschman did, and it almost paid off. Swanson elected not to pit as part of the controlled caution period on lap 83, and took over the lead when most others went down pit road. Swanson led the race from lap 83-112, before Hirschman took control when Swanson spun his tires on the restart.

Swanson would finish second, while Andy Jankowiak, who played a similar strategy and stayed out, finished third. Jankowiak was involved in a wreck on lap 25 with veteran Dave Sapienza, but

was able to rebound.

Ronnie Williams started third and finished fourth, and Eric Goodale made his return to the Tri Track Series and rounded out the top five. NASCAR Cup Series regular Ryan Preece was sixth in his return to Modified racing, while Anthony Nocella, Austin Kochenash, Cam McDermott and Ron Silk finished the top-10.

Earlier in the day, Ron Silk, Matt Hirschman, Andy Shaw and Andy Jankowiak won heat races, while Anthony Nocella and Calvin Carroll earned consi wins. Both heat and consi winners collected \$300 courtesy of the Pepsi Challenge.

Swanson, who passed 25 Modifieds en route to the front, earned a \$500 hard charger bonus courtesy of Green Construction. Since pole sitter Austin Kochenash didn’t win the race, courtesy of Superior Refinishing, the next race on the circuit will pay a \$600 bonus if the pole sitter wins the race.

The Tri Track Open Modified Series returns to the track on Saturday, August 15, with the second stop of the season at Monadnock Speedway.

RESULTS: Tri Track Open Modified Series; Star Speedway; July 25:

1. Matt Hirschman
2. Matt Swanson
3. Andy Jankowiak
4. Ronnie Williams
5. Eric Goodale
6. Ryan Preece
7. Anthony Nocella
8. Austin Kochenash
9. Cam McDermott
10. Ron Silk
11. Calvin Carroll
12. Kurt Vigeant
13. Kirk Alexander
14. Craig Lutz
15. Bryan Narducci
16. Devin O’Connell
17. Andy Shaw
18. Les Rose Jr.
19. Dylan Izzo
20. Tommy Barrett
21. Dave Sapienza
22. Richard Savary
23. Ryan Doucette
24. Les Hinckley
25. Carl Medeiros Jr.
26. Dana DiMatteo
27. Josh Cantara

Racing to resume in Thompson

THOMPSON, Conn. — Econn Motorsports and Thompson Speedway Motorsports Park announced this week an agreement that will enable oval track racing to continue on the famed 5/8th mile at Thompson, CT.

Plans currently call for Econn Motorsports to also host an open practice on Wednesday, August 5. Racing is set to resume with the Bud 150 on Wednesday August 19 and the Sunoco World Series on October 9-11. The NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour is expected to headline both race dates. The parties are exploring the possibility of additional race meets during 2020.

Econn Motorsports is a newly

formed race promotion and consulting firm headed by Terry Eames, former General Manager of Thompson Speedway Motorsports Park. “The COVID-19 pandemic put oval track racing at Thompson in 2020 at risk. We are proud to announce that the Hoenig family and Econn have found a way for oval track racing to continue during the track’s 80th year and beyond”, Eames said.

Specific details of next week’s practice will be available over the next several days at EconnMotorsports.com. Tickets will only be available online and in advance in keeping with the policies set forth by the State of Connecticut designed to limit the spread of COVID-19.

Relics return after long hiatus

LUDLOW – The Western Mass Relics, which is a summer/fall Senior Softball recreational slow pitch League has resumed play last week. The Relics field two divisions: the silver division is comprised of men 50-64 years of age and the bronze division is men 65 and over.

For the more competitive player there is opportunity to join a travel team and participate in local, regional and national tournaments.

Teams in both divisions normally play two games a week in the evenings, with all games played at the Fish & Game Club in Ludlow. These weekly games emphasize fun, friend-

ship and good sportsmanship.

This year due to the coronavirus all players have to wear masks in the field except the outfielders. The players temperatures are taken before they enter the field. If a player has a temperature, the player must leave the field and return home. Players must bring a lawn chair so they can social distance when a team is batting. The Relics have dispensed with hand shaking, fist bumps and any other contact with players.

For further information or to join the league contact Steve Lepow at 860-885-4556 or Ted Chmura at 413-589-1965.

SPEEDWAY, from page 7

bobbling on a restart to move Robie up to second, from where he would add to his points lead, earning valuable breathing room ahead of Trevor Bleau, who finished 15th on the night.

A week earlier, Aaron Fellows kept his undefeated season intact by passing Cole Littlewood with only two laps to go en route to Late Model Sportsman victory lane. Friday, he again passed Littlewood late in the game, this time on turn three of the final lap to add more luster to his unblemished record.

Littlewood, third a week earlier, held on for second Friday, with Robert Hagar coming home third. Willie Kuhn and Justin Littlewood completed the top five.

Hillary Renaud, gunning for two in a row in the sizzling Streets, led the first 14 circuits of her 25-lapper but then blinked, quickly finding herself back in forth as the flying Curtis twins, Chase and Jaret, stormed past, bringing Tommy O’Sullivan with them.

It was Chase Curtis first under the checkers, with his points-leading sibling Jaret riding in his shadow. Renaud’s fourth-place run moved her up to fifth in points. Friday’s victory was Chase Curtis’s second of the summer, with both

his father Chris and brother Jaret also having topped Street Stock features.

It took Gordon Farnum eight laps to come from row three to the point in the Mini Stock feature but, once there, he checked out on the field to score his third win of the summer. Kevin Clayton, strong all night, came home second, just ahead of Mark Panaroni.

Pure Stock powerhouse Chris Davis shook the late-race bugaboos that had plagued him in recent weeks Friday, taking control on lap two and then checking out. While Davis made it look easy, a tight battle raged behind him, with Mike Douglas emerging strong to cop the runner-up honors, just in front of Claremont regular Dylan Adams, who made his high-banks debut successful in third.

In the night’s Iron Mike Memorial NEMA Midget main event, open-wheel legend Randy Cabral did what he’s done at least once over the last 20 years. Cabral blasted to victory in the caution-free 30-lapper, taking the checkers ahead of Todd Bertrand and early-race leader Paul Scally. Avery Stohr topped the Lites 30-lapper.

Next Saturday, August 1, the Granite State Pro Stock Series will return to the Winchester high banks, where they’ll battle in a 100-lap main event. For more

information, please visit www.monadnockspeedway.com.

MONADNOCK SPEEDWAY JULY 25 TOP TENS:

SPORTSMAN MODIFIED: Ben Byrne, Brian Robie, Brian Chapin, Keith Carzello, Russ Hersey, Solomon Brow, Cory Plummer, Cameron Houle, Andy Major, Jerry Gomarlo.

PURE STOCK: Chris Davis, Mike Douglas, Dylan Adams, Brandon Lavoie, Nick Houle, Doug Nelson, Cory Lofland, J.D. Stockwell, Reagan Buffum, Jimmy Zellman.

MINI STOCK: Gordon Farnum, Kevin Clayton, Mark Panaroni, Nathan Wenzel, Bill Chaffee, Kevin McKnight, Jake Puchalski, Jared Roy, Jeff Asselin.

STREET STOCK: Chase Curtis, Jaret Curtis, Tommy O’Sullivan, Hillary Renaud, Mike Hopkins, Chris Buffone, Mike Radzuik, Kyle Gero, Paul Barnard, Tim Wenzel.

LATE MODEL SPORTSMAN: Aaron Fellows, Cole Littlewood, Robert Hagar, Willie Kuhn, Justin Littlewood, Ron Laperche, James Beck, Nancy Muni Ruot, Billy McCarthy, Camdyn Curtis.

NEMA MIDGETS (Top 3): Randy Cabral, Todd Bertrand, Paul Scally.

NEMA LITES (Top 3): Avery Stohr, Ryan Locke, P.J. Stergios.

DELAYED, from page 7

been explored was the possibility of playing baseball and softball in fall season and moving soccer and football to spring. The idea was turned down in the early stages out of risk that a baseball or softball player could “lose two seasons.”

The board also unanimously passed a recommendation to suspend the end-of-game handshakes until further notice to reduce contact between teams.

Currently, only high school-age baseball and some softball tournaments are being played in Massachusetts with sanitization and social distancing being adhered to.

Among sports that could be played in the fall currently are volleyball, cross country, field hockey, and golf. It is not yet known if high school students will be allowed to play football or soccer this fall.

How to contact the Sports Editor

Have the scoop on a local sports story? Want to submit a team photo, pass along a potential story idea, or just find out how to get a copy of that great photo of your young athlete? Please send all sports-related press releases and information to Sports Editor Greg Scibelli at: sports@turley.com or call, 1-413-283-8393.

This paper publishes birth, engagement, wedding and significant anniversary announcements free of charge.
Simply log on to our web site, choose the paper you want the announcement to appear in, then use our SUBMISSION link to email your information.





www.newspapers.turley.com

Baseball clinics to take place in August at Mackenzie Field

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Parks and Recreation Department in conjunction with the John Murphy Youth Baseball League will be conducting baseball clinics.

To sign up for the clinic, please contact Coach Terry Murphy at tmurphy1hcc@comcast.net.

Clinics will follow all of the board of health requirements regarding masks, spacing and cleaning of equipment. Players with their own bats and helmets or catcher’s gear are encouraged to bring to the clinic.

Clinics will be run by former Holyoke Community College baseball coach Terry Murphy. He will be assisted by Bob Prattico, former Holyoke Catholic coach, Mike Afflitto, Smith Academy coach, and Mike Prattico, Amherst High School coach. Added to the coaching staff is Dioni Soriano Bello, a former player in Japan and Latin America. They will also be assisted by several former high school players as well. A trainer will also be on hand for each session.

Potential Baseball Clinics Schedule

All clinics to take place at Mackenzie Field

Free of charge for Holyoke residents, \$10 for non-residents

Wednesday, August 5
5:45 p.m. - 7:45 p.m. (Age group 7-10)

Thursday, August 6
5:45 p.m. - 7:45 p.m. (Age group 14-17)

Monday, August 10
10 a.m. to 12 noon (age group 11-13)

Wednesday, August 12
10 a.m. – 12 noon (age group 7-10)

Wednesday, August 12
5:45 p.m. - 7:45 p.m. (age group 14-17)

Thursday, August 13
5:45 p.m. - 7:45 p.m. (age group 11-13)

Monday, August 17
10 a.m. – 12 noon (age group 7-10)

Wednesday, August 19
10 a.m. – 12 noon (age group 11-13)

Wednesday, August 19
5:45 p.m. - 7:45 p.m. (age group 14-17)

Thursday, August 20
5:45 p.m. - 7:45 p.m. (age group 7-10)

Wednesday, August 26
10 a.m. – 12 noon (age group 14-17)

Wednesday, August 26
5:45 p.m. - 7:45 p.m. (age group 11-13)

Pinehurst Resort to host High School Golf National Invitational

BOSTON – Pinehurst Resort in North Carolina will host both the Boys and Girls 2020 High School Golf National Invitational, August 3-5. Participants will come from more than 40 states—more than 110 girls and 250 boys—to compete in a three-round, 54-hole, stroke-play format.

The High School Golf National Invitational showcases golf at the highest level, bringing together the strongest and most diverse field in high school golf from large, small, public and private high school programs across the United States. It was first played in 1919, with 300 boys and girls representing 43 states. Competitors include State Championship winning boys and girls players; the nation’s best high school golf teams; and top individuals from each state. With the loss of the spring 2020 high school golf season, this event is even more important to showcase the most talented high school golfers from across America.

The Boys and Girls National Invitational will be played on Pinehurst’s No. 6, No. 8 and No. 9 courses, and include team and individual competitions. Pinehurst Resort is steeped in tradition and has hosted some of golf’s greatest events, including the PGA Championship, Ryder Cup, U.S. Open, Women’s U.S. Open and U.S. Amateur.

“It’s really incredible to bring the 2020 High School Golf National Invitational to Pinehurst Resort, where the players can experience one of the best golf facilities in the world,” said NHSGA Manager Chris Noble. “This event is the pinnacle of high school golf and valuable to college coaches seeking hidden talent they may not see on the junior golf circuit otherwise, especially during an unprecedented year like this.”

Last year, the Girls Invitational went down to the wire, with a two-hole playoff for the top high school teams, after South Carolina and California totaled two-day team scores of 584. The four-on-four aggregate team playoff was won with a birdie on the final hole by tournament medalist Kamille Dimayuga (Buena Park, Calif.), who shot consecutive rounds of 71, to finish with a 2-under par, 142 total.

Virginia won the 2019 Boys Division team title with a two-day score of 581 (291-290). Second place went to Arkansas (592), followed by Pennsylvania (598) in third. Aidan Thomas from Bernalillo, N.M., fired a career-best round 65 on day one of the tournament; and followed with a 70 on day two, to win the individual medalist title with a 9-under par, 135 total.

The High School Golf National Invitational is conducted by the National High School Golf Association (NHSGA), a division of Nextgengolf, which was acquired by the PGA of America in 2019. The Invitational is supported by several partners, including the PGA of America, AJGA, Srixon, Gatorade and Junior Golf Hub.

Public Notices

3

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Holyoke Historical Commission
Public Hearing Notice

Demolition Application:

246 Lyman Street
(006-07-017)

Applicant:

OneHolyoke Community Development Corporation,
70 Lyman Street,
Holyoke, MA 01040

Monday, August 10, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

Due to the declared public health emergency, the meeting will be held via zoom.us

Join Zoom Meeting:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83412804041

Or call 1 (301) 715 8592 (Meeting ID: 834 1280 4041)

For additional information contact: Ben Murphy
murphyb@holyoke.org
(413) 322-5655

Comisión Histórica de Holyoke

Aviso de Audiencia Pública

Solicitudes para Demolición:

246 Lyman Street
(006-07-017)

Solicitante:

OneHolyoke Community Development Corporation,
70 Lyman Street,
Holyoke, MA 01040

lunes 10 de Agosto de 2020 a las 6:30 p.m.

Debido a la emergencia de salud pública declarada, la reunión se llevará a cabo a través de zoom.us

Unese a la reunion de Zoom aqui:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83412804041

o llame al 1(301) 715 8592 (Meeting ID: 834 1280 4041)

Para mas información favor de llamar a: Ben Murphy
murphyb@holyoke.org
(413) 322-5655

07/24, 07/31/20

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court

Probate and Family Court
Hampden Division

50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-8600

Docket No. HD20P0710EA

Estate of: Charles J. Athas

Date of Death: December 27, 2019

INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner Candia M. Athas of Holyoke, MA., a Will has been admitted to informal probate.

Candia M. Athas of

Holyoke, MA has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve without surety on the bond.

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner.

07/31/2020

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court

Hampden Probate and Family Court

50 State Street

Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758

Docket No. HD20P1144EA

Estate of:

Rita Madeline Kaplan

Also known as:

Rita M Kaplan

Date of Death: 05/28/2020

CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:

A Petition for Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by Anne M Grady of Wilbraham, MA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that: Anne M Grady of Wilbraham, MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve Without Surety on the bond in an unsupervised administration.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the

return day of 08/21/2020.

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)

A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M Hyland, First Justice of this Court.

Date: July 17, 2020

Suzanne T. Seguin
Register of Probate

07/31/2020

The Sun

OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$120, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

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The Holyoke Sun • JULY 31, 2020 • 9

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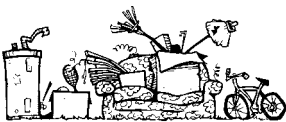
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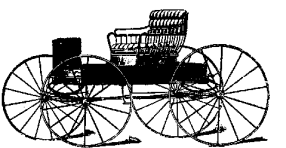
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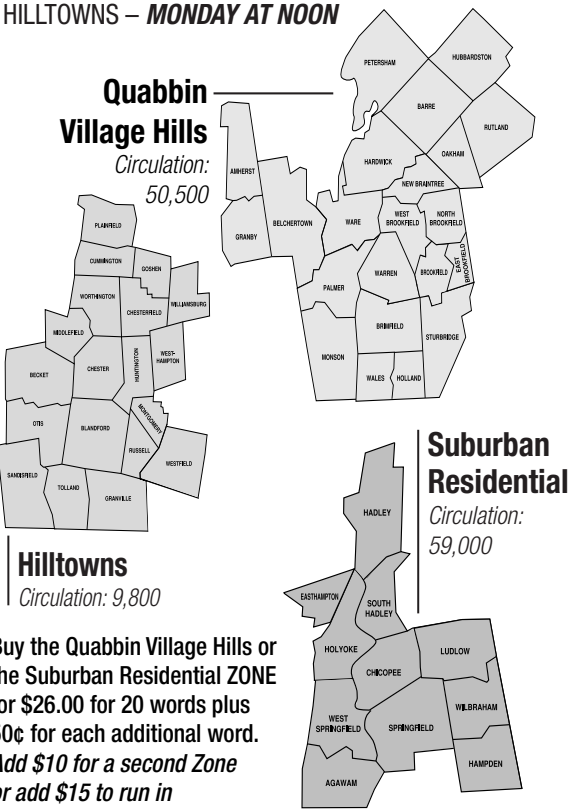
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SCHOOLS, from page 1

his team who have all partnered with me to understand the planning that has occurred to-date for the 2020-21 school year. Additionally, HPS continues to work closely with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Department of Public Health and the MA medical community in order to ensure that returning to school in the fall can be done as safely as possible.

Importantly, I want to thank all the Holyoke families who responded to our return-to-school survey. In just one week, we received more than 1,700 responses, representing nearly 2,600 students - about 50% of our student population! This strong response rate is a testament to our families and their commitment to work with us to plan for a successful school year.

The survey results reiterated what I know to be true. This is a critical time for Holyoke to live out our vision of a pathway for every student. Accordingly, we must plan for and implement both remote learning and in-person learning options (the latter, of course, as allowed pending the health environment). To be absolutely clear, every student will be allowed to continue remote learning if their parent/guardian chooses to keep them at home.

Our planning takes into consideration the need to prepare for remote learning (for any student who requests it, as well as for every student if the health environment requires it), hybrid learning (some in-person and remote learning for students who choose to be in person) and in-person learning (for students who choose). For example:

We have purchased a device for every student from kindergarten to grade 12, which will be distributed for any student participating in remote learning.

Teachers will participate in training to implement blended learning, meaning students learn via online and in traditional face-to-face teaching.

We are being cognizant of meeting the holistic needs of our children, which include not only language arts and math, but social emotional and physical health as well.

Next school year will look and feel very different. Teams of administrators, teachers and staff are currently working to determine how HPS can provide instruction, food service, transportation, and co-curriculars, while at the same time keeping students and staff as safe as possible. Parent/guardian and student voice are also very important. We encourage you to continue sharing your thoughts with us by participating in surveys, submitting suggestions and questions to <https://www.hps.holyoke.ma.us/about-us/contact/> and asking questions during the Facebook Live sessions. We will inform you of other opportunities to have input as they arise.

Our preliminary plan is due to DESE on July 31, and we will contact all families in early-to-mid August to share more details about the plan and get a commitment from each family about their plan for the fall. We understand that families need more information about the plans for both remote learning and in-person learning, so that you can make the best decision for your child and family. Our final plan is due to DESE on August 10.

Thank you,
Dr. Alberto Vázquez Matos,
Superintendent/ Receiver

Bryan Albert Marcotte

Bryan Albert Marcotte, 68, of South Hadley passed away peacefully July 13, 2020. He was born on July 26, 1951 in Derry, New Hampshire to the late Albert and Marie-Louise (Peroni) Marcotte. Bryan was a second generation owner of Marcotte Ford in Holyoke and dedicated his life to building the business that was passed down by his father. He loved his family dearly and giving back to his community. He was an avid supporter of the Holyoke Boys & Girls Club, Providence Ministries and Kate's Kitchen. Bryan will be forever missed by his loving wife, Carlene (Lambert) Marcotte and their four children, Suzanne Keller, husband Brian and their children Jackson, Brody and Hunter; Carolyn Crowley, husband Sean and their children Graeme



and Liam; Mike Marcotte; and Kaitlin Methot, husband Kyle and their children Kye, Kooper and Camden. He also leaves two sisters, Linda Gleason, husband David and their children Kristin and Craig; and Jeannie Filomeno, husband Mike and their children James and Jackie as well as many dear friends and a loyal Marcotte Ford family.

Services will be held privately for his family and a celebration of Bryan's life will be held in the future. Beers & Story Funeral Home has been entrusted with the arrangements. In lieu of flowers, donations in Bryans name may be made to the Holyoke Boys & Girls Club, www.hbgc.org or to Providence Ministries, 51 Hamilton St. Holyoke, MA 01040. Please visit www.beersand-story.com to sign the online guest book.

OBITUARY POLICY: Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries. One is a free, brief Death Notice listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place. The other is a Paid Obituary, costing \$89, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. Death Notices & Paid Obituaries should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com. Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

DEATH NOTICE

Marcotte,
Bryan Albert

Died: July 13, 2020
Services are Private
Celebration of life will be held in the future

Read The Sun online at www.sun.turley.com

TESTING, from page 1

Gov. Baker announced 16 different sites in the Commonwealth, with Agawam and Springfield the only sites that are west of Worcester. The Springfield site has yet to be determined as of press time. Other testing

sites are out in Eastern Mass., including Brockton, Lowell, Fall River, Lawrence, New Bedford, and Lynn.

Central Massachusetts sites include Worcester and Marlborough.

In Western Massachusetts, Hampden County has the highest numbers of positive cases, though it is also the most populated. Agawam has had a

lower number of cases despite a number of cases early in the pandemic that occurred at Heritage Hall.

For any issues trying to schedule a COVID-19 test, you can also contact the Agawam health department for more information.

The program is part of a #StopTheSpread initiative by the state.

"This program will support the testing of asymptomatic individuals in these communities to help stop the spread of COVID-19," the state website says. "If you are a resident of one of these communities, even if you have no COVID symptoms, please get tested to help stop the spread."

Classifieds

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Classified Advertising DEADLINES

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WNEU Law school to hold virtual discussion July 27

SPRINGFIELD – The Western New England University School of Law’s Center for Social Justice will host “From the Courthouse to the Streets: Lawyering in the Time of Black Lives Matter” Monday, July 27 from 5 to 6:30 p.m. This event is free and open to all with registration.

Attendees of the virtual panel will be able to hear from a group of nationally-curated experts who will answer the question: what place does lawyering hold in this moment of grand social transformation?

“This panel is an outstanding opportunity for the first time to hold the law

accountable for Black lives in a positive way,” said atty. Kylar Broadus, trans rights activist and founder of the Trans People of Color Coalition. “While we march, and call for change, we must make sure to put into action changes that truly impact, reform, abolish, make and implement positive changes that protect all lives-but especially Black lives. If we can have the bar set at protecting and making sure Black Lives Matter, the law will be more just and fair to all.”

The panel will include Dr. Jodie Roure, of John Jay College of Criminal

Justice; Tyler Crawford, director, Mass. Defense for the National Lawyers Guild; Carlton Williams, movement lawyer; and WNEU professor Jennifer Levi, director of GLAD’s Transgender Rights Project.

Launched in 2019, the Center for Social Justice is designed to strengthen collaborative efforts between the School of Law and the region to work toward a more just, equitable and inclusive society in its next century of service. The Center provides a centralized hub of activity and innovation for the School of Law’s justice-related teaching, scholarship, and ser-

vice. It also broadens social justice academic offerings, helps students aspiring to be social justice lawyers achieve their goals, manages in-house pro bono projects, and works closely with community organizations and partners to identify and address unmet needs that require a multi-dimensional response cutting across law and other fields.

To register, visit <https://bit.ly/3gCX-sDz>. For more information, contact Ariel Clemmer at ariel.clemmer@law.wne.edu or Bridgette Baldwin at bbaldwin@law.wne.edu.

► Holyoke Arrests

Tuesday, July 21

A juvenile was arrested at 11:23 a.m. for possession with intent to distribute of Class A and B drugs.

Anthony Richard LeBlanc, 35, of 44 Pearl St., Holyoke, was arrested at 8:07 p.m. and charged with possession of a Class A drug and possession of unlawful fireworks.

Thursday, July 23

A juvenile was arrested at 2:22 a.m. on a warrant.

Eric R. Galica, Jr., 23, of 29 Beacon Ave., Holyoke, was arrested at 9:36 a.m. on a warrant.

Kendrick Dovon Harvey, 25, of 123

Walnut St., Holyoke, was arrested at 4:15 p.m. at failure to stop for police, reckless operation of a motor vehicle, driving with a revoked license, violation of a harassment prevention order, and an outstanding warrant.

Saturday, July 25

Joshua E. Marrero, 33, of 32 Gates St., Holyoke, was arrested at 1:04 a.m. for operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license.

Sunday, July 26

Daris Santiago, 26, of 62.5 Nototuck St., Holyoke, was arrested at 12:56 a.m. for operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license.



The Connecticut River at Pynchon Point in Agawam. The state recently approved more funding for the riverside.

Submitted photo

SUPPORTING, from page 1

The resolutions support the Coalition’s appeal to the state to expedite the design of a new Soldiers’ Home in Holyoke. The design would allow for the construction of fully compliant rooms for 250 Veterans, including a toilet and shower in each bedroom and supports the Coalition’s strong advocacy for an Adult Day Health Care program at the Home.

The resolutions agree with the Coalition that the state must meet the VA project submission dates of April 15, 2021 for these projects to finally get off the ground.

“It is my honor and privilege to put this resolution forward for all our heroes who have passed away from this unbelievable tragedy,” said Ludlow Selectmen Derek DeBarge, who introduced the resolution.

“We encourage cities and towns across our Commonwealth to take similar action to demonstrate their support for significant improvements to the Soldiers’ Home in Holyoke,” said a statement today by the Coalition. “Through their elected representatives, we call on every citizen in our state to advocate for increased funding and staffing for the Soldiers’

Home, the construction of a new and upgraded Home, to include an Adult Day Healthcare Program, and better governance and oversight. We must address the inadequate and unsafe conditions that contributed to the deaths of 76 Veterans to COVID-19.”

In addition to Granby, Ludlow, and Southwick, organizations that have also passed resolutions in support of Coalition efforts include the Massachusetts Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, representing all VFW members in the state and the American Legion and Chapter One-Eleven of the Vietnam Veterans of America.

More cities and towns and organizations are also expected to pass resolutions. Media can check the Coalition’s “Our Coalition” page for a complete list of members, names of citizens who support the Coalition, to include elected officials, organizations and now cities and towns.

Citizens, cities, towns and organizations can write to the Coalition at HolyokeSoldiersHomeCoalition@gmail.com for assistance with the language for a resolution and to discuss Coalition efforts, our mission, and goals to bring much-needed improvements to the Soldiers’ Home in Holyoke.

GRADUATION, from page 1

live broadcasted in English and Spanish, with large screens placed in the school’s two large parking lots. The school will also have a professional photographer present to capture moments during the entire ceremony. Taylor explained that the school will also have a photographer and videographer present to ensure that special moments are captured for students and their families. Though the absence of family attendance will be a loss to the ceremony, it will still be a joyful and celebrated event.

“They are Adams Scholars and hospital interns, full-time electricians and 4-year, 3-sport varsity athletes, they are stage crew and leading actors from our theater program and they are young men and women who turned a poor start to high school into a triumphant finish,” Taylor said. “They are full of promise, they are exceptionally accomplished, and they are Holyoke Strong.”

Taylor explained that the staff decided to do a summer graduation in the hopes of hosting a traditional ceremony at Roberts Field. The plans were adjusted due to the pandemic as well as crowd gathering regulations, as the timeframe for August would hopefully allow the easing of social distancing rules.

“In considering plans and venues with stakeholders, we learned that the first summer graduation that we planned at Roberts Field that included the seniors, two immediate family members, and essential staff, would need to be limited to only seniors and essential staff to adhere to the Board of Health guidelines,” Taylor said.

The plan after that was to host graduation at Holyoke Community College’s tiered parking lot as a drive-in event, where families would remain in their cars. Though this would serve all the traditions except being held at Roberts Stadium, so the plans changed again to this Sunday, August 2, at the Roberts Complex.

PROJECTS, from page 1

This is the sixth straight year of funding from the Commonwealth for CSO work in the region, all of which has come from authorizations within the State’s Environmental Bond Bills.

“Holyoke is committed to continuously enhancing our environmental stewardship, and we are grateful to MassDEP and the legislature for funding these critical projects,” said Holyoke Mayor Alex Morse.

“Communities such as ours are under great financial strain due to the coronavirus pandemic and we are grateful to the CRCC for their continued support,” Mayor John L. Vieau. “This funding will allow us to continue to meet federal and state requirements and protect our shared natural resources, without the added burden to our City’s lean budget.”

“I want to thank the CRCC for their continued leadership advocating for our beloved riverfront and local community infrastructure needs, and to Governor Baker and his administration for their unyielding efforts supporting our Western Massachusetts communities that about our beautiful Connecticut River,” Springfield Mayor Domenic J. Sarno stated. “The PVPC does a tre-

mendous job in bringing all local and state stakeholders together so that projects like these are successful.”

“In these challenging times we are especially appreciative of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection’s continued support for the communities of Springfield, Chicopee and Holyoke under our collective Connecticut River Clean-up Committee effort,” observed PVPC Executive Director Kimberly H. Robinson. “This funding helps shift the burden of fixing this legacy infrastructure away from some of our most financially strained communities while continuing to improve the Connecticut River water quality standards at a time when COVID-19 is clearly demonstrating the need for safe and healthy outdoor recreation opportunities for all of our Valley’s residents.”

The Connecticut River Clean Up Committee (CRCC) is a regional collaborative convened and staffed by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission since 1993 that has brought together communities in addressing combined sewer infrastructure issues. The Committee now includes the Cities of Chicopee and Holyoke, the Springfield Water & Sewer Commission (SWSC), and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection.

VELIS, from page 1

COVID-19 Supplemental Budget, which will help with infection control efforts. In addition, the Senator held a listening session in Westfield last Friday with some of the families of veterans who passed away at the home, and says he will continue holding sessions as the committee begins work.

“We need to do everything in our power to make sure that what happened at the Home, will never happen again,” said Velis. “I think it’s

extremely important that we continue to hear from those families that were directly affected, in order to inform our work and address every issue they had to go through.”

Joining Senator Velis on the joint-committee from the Western Massachusetts delegation will be Sen. James Welch (D-West Springfield), Rep. Aaron Vega (D-Holyoke), Rep. Joe Wagner (D-Chicopee), Rep. Michael Finn (D-West Springfield), and Rep. Mindy Domb (D-Amherst).

A report and any draft legislation from the committee are due by March, 31, 2021.